

# HISTORIAN

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OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi

January 1997

## JANUARY HAPPENINGS

The highlight of this month, in lieu of our regular meeting, is a bus tour to the New Orleans Museum of Art to view the Faberge exhibit.

Members with tour reservations will leave from the Loblano House at 1 p.m. on Thursday, January 16th. A few reservations are available at \$22.00. Call 467-4090.

There will be no formal meeting or lunch served. Before departure, tour members will gather at noon for a brown-bag lunch with other society members.

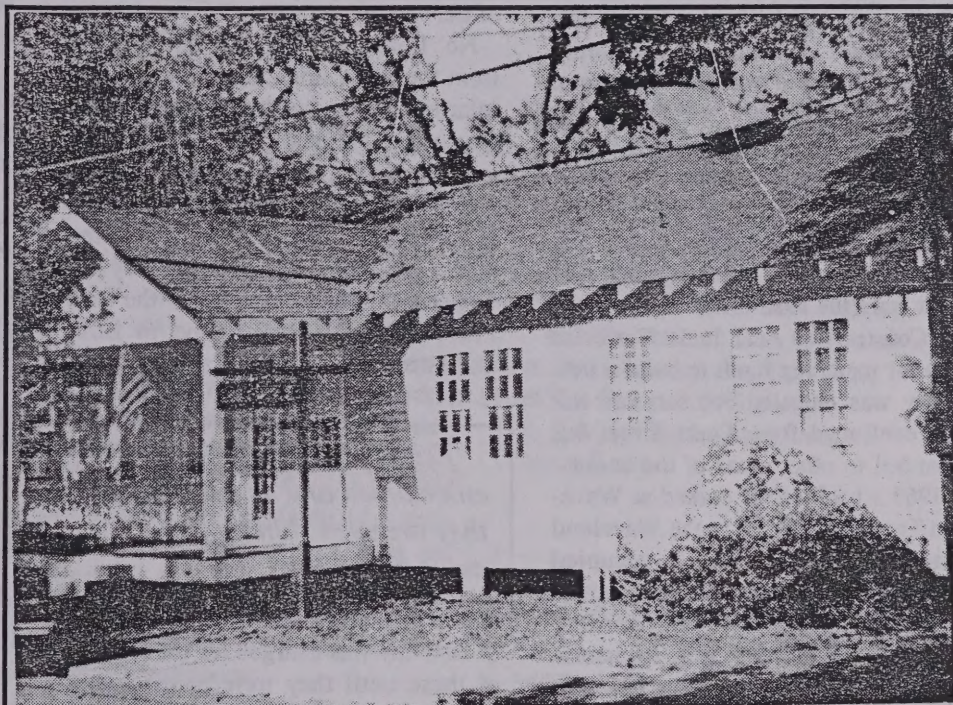
## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

After considerable consideration, the Board of Directors and I concluded that 1996 shall be officially declared to be in and of the past. Subsequently it shall be called "history" and shall be recorded as we see fit; "history" being lies agreed upon. I think 1996 will fare fairly well.

1996 was a year of great progress for us: spacious new work and meeting room, new copier, new computers, on-line service and astonishing growth in membership. It will be difficult to top 1996 this year, but you can bet that we are going to try.

I want to thank you for the great response you always make to request for items that we need. Herbie Pursley brought in a set of punch cups over the holidays which brings our collection to an impressive level. We thank you and hope to have enough guests to use them all. Come visit your Loblano House.

Charles H. Gray



CITY-COUNTY MEMORIAL LIBRARY  
123 COURT STREET 1953 - 1976

## PERSEVERANCE BUILT CITY-COUNTY LIBRARY

In its Golden Jubilee edition of 1941 the *Sea Coast Echo* hailed the then-private library as a "great asset to city and county."

The article describes the birth of the library after the "death of three previous libraries." Unfortunately for history buffs, no details were given. However, a November 1907 *Sea Coast Echo* article refers to the "Kings Daughters Library" destroyed in the fire of that year.

A 1934 WPA grant established a library

that would not only endure but grow to today's library on Highway 90 with up-to-date technology, two branches, elegant expansion and renovation in 1995, and a tile mural designed by local artist Elizabeth Veglia and executed by numerous local citizens in 1996.

The first "WPA Library" was housed on the second floor of Hancock Bank from 1934 until 1948 when it moved to the Knights of Columbus building on Main Street where it remained until 1953 when the library board, with \$7,800 in donations bought the home

(Continued on page 2).



**(Library from page 1)**

at 123 Court Street from the Plunkett family. "WPA" dropped from its name which became "City-County Memorial Library," but it was still a private venture dependent on donations.

In 1965 the library board offered its property and books, valued at \$50,000, to the county and its two cities in order to qualify for public support. The following year the Board of Supervisors formally accepted the offer and allocated millage for support of the library. Bay St. Louis and Waveland soon followed. With local support, the library was eligible for aid from the Mississippi Library Commission which loaned shelving, furniture and books. It was now truly a "public" library.

In 1967 the property at Highway 90 and Ulman Avenue was purchased for \$17,000, and the board applied for funds from the federal Library Services and Construction Act. In 1968 a bond issue for matching funds to build a new library was defeated but services not only continued from Court Street but expanded to other areas of the county. In 1969 a bookmobile parked at Waveland Town Hall served as the Waveland branch until 1971 when it occupied rooms in the building and later moved to its present site on Coleman Avenue.

By 1973 federal funds were forthcoming for a new building and in 1976 the main library and Waveland branches were opened, with Kiln following in 1980.

Edith Back

Following is the 1941 *Sea Coast Echo* story:

### COUNTY WPA LIBRARY IS GREAT ASSET TO CITY AND COUNTY

Out of chaotic surroundings and 200 books on the floor of the second story of the Hancock Bank has grown an institution which is a credit to Miss Louise Crawford, the library board, the city and county whose untiring efforts have brought the Hancock County WPA Library to a standard far beyond the expectations of the public - far beyond

their own expectations.

The library, which was seven years old in March 1941, saw the light against great odds, the greatest the death of three previous libraries. The initial step was the book shower and tea when the nucleus was formed. All woman organizations, civic and otherwise, were represented and Charles G. Moran made a stirring address.

Miss Crawford was appointed at the helm of this trial ship, supported by a strong library board and the cooperation of the community.

No financial aid was forthcoming from the WPA (then the CWA) except salaries of those employed. Hence some plan must of necessity be devised to raise funds for the purchase of books. Among the clever ones was the annual birthday party when the friends of the library were entertained and as they left dropped shining gold coins in the box. Then, too, gift books came in from interested friends and the cash was used to buy the newer books which were

*Friends of the library were entertained and as they left, they dropped shining gold coins in the box.*

placed on a rent shelf and the slight cost of 2c a day was charged for the reading of these until they were paid for and then they too were retired to the free shelf.

Then there was the question of location and this was forthcoming from the Hancock Bank and the present home of the library, the second floor of the bank, was offered rent free. It has never been a certainty that these kind friends expected the library to take this as a gift and stay on through the ages but they are still there until the dream of the new library building built by the county and city becomes a reality.

Another means of raising funds was that of the monthly book review when home talent and professional reviewers reviewed the newer books and a fee was charged and in this way small sums were realized for the many needs of the library.

The county furnished lumber, paint, stationery and \$100. The city gave a stove, a rug, fuel, janitress service, shipping charges on donated books and \$30.00 on the cost of the Encyclopedia Britannica.

The next step was reaching the people of the rural sections and book stations were established at Aaron Academy, Ansley, Catahoula, Clermont Harbor, Dedeaux, Edwardsville, Gainesville, Hoda town, Necaise Crossing, Valena C. Jones, Bay St. Louis, Sellers, and Waveland. These Miss Crawford visited monthly taking new supplies.

Story hours were a feature of all stations and Miss Caroline Dale Snedecker conducted one at the Bay St. Louis main library.

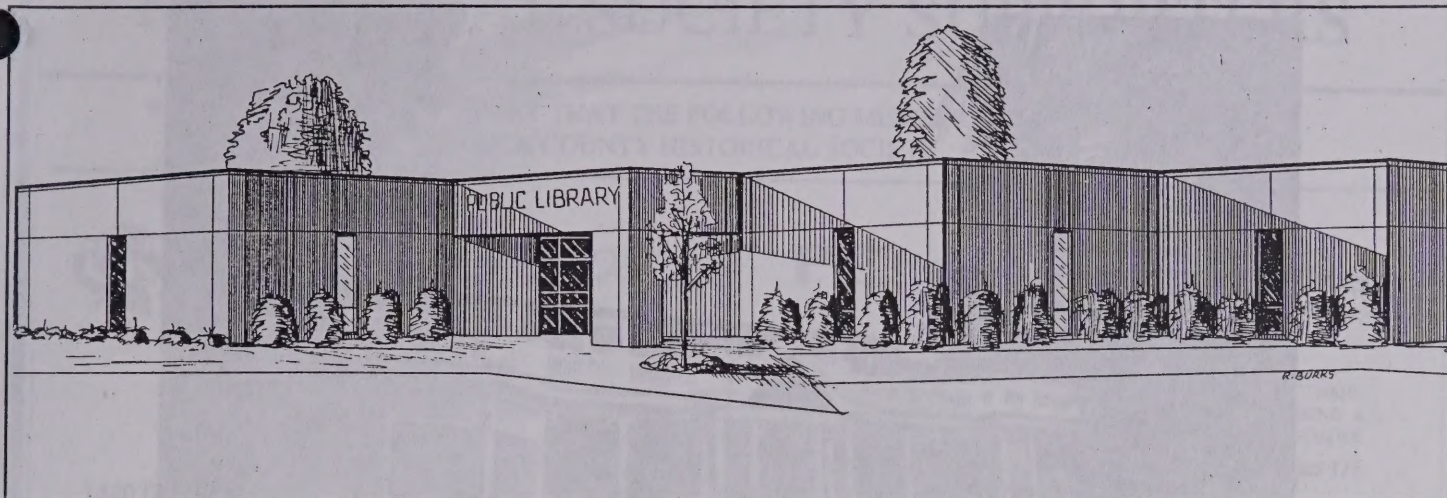
The library was soon receiving books from out of town sources. The Clovernook Home for the Blind in Cincinnati sent books which had been ripped apart in the process of transcribing them into Braille. Miss Crawford put in a system of book binding to put these into readable shape. Later the WPA installed a regular book binding department giving instructions to those employed and that department is an important feature of the library.

Other donations of books sent as donations other than the Clovernook Home for the Blind are Carnegie International Mind Alcove, American Printing House for the Blind in Louisville, Cincinnati Public Library, New York Public Library, New York Hospital for bone diseases and friends in Nantucket, Texas and Chicago.

At the present time the library has listed 3000 readers and has acquired 7000 books. It still holds the interest of the community and the number readers increases daily.

The following ladies constitute the library board: Mrs. John Weston, president; Mrs. J. Roland Weston, vice president; Mrs. L.M. Gex, vice president, Mrs. William Watts, treasurer, Miss Louise A. Crawford, secretary; Mrs. Carl Marshall, Mrs. H. Grady Perkins, Mrs. George E. Pitcher, Mrs. Edouard C. Carrere, Mrs. C.I. Horton and Mrs. H. M. Briggs.





Architectural rendering of the new City-County Public Library of the Hancock County Library System  
From the invitation to its dedication on Sunday, June 27, 1976

### RUDY JUNG

We wish to express our sympathy to the family of Rudy Jung who died January 2nd. Rudy was a long time member of the Historical Society and a generous supporter of our work. He donated all the carpet for our new addition and recently he donated a channel light recovered from Pass Marianne following Camille. He will be missed.

### LEO SEAL AND FAMILY DONATION

We would like to thank Leo Seal, Jr. and his family for their annual donation to the Historical Society. This is a wonderful New Year tradition and one that we greatly appreciate. Leo's contributions in past years have helped us through some very slim times.

### MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

It is difficult to know exactly what our present membership is. In the past, we have considered "membership" and "Historian mail-out" to be the same. However, married couples, both of whom consider themselves to be members are only reflected in the mail-out list as being one. This number today is 486.

collection of dues, we have tried to make all memberships due on January 1st each year. New members are asked to pay for only the remaining part of the year in which they join so that they too will be due the following January. Annual dues are still only \$12.00 each.

Anyone who has not paid their 1997 membership dues should do so as soon as possible so that we can plan our budget for the year. We appreciate your help with this.

We welcome to the following most recent new members;

Mr. Bill Johns, Memphis, Tn.  
Mrs. Retta Cordin, Bay St. Louis  
Mr. Richard Hunter, Waveland  
Ms. Marbeth Erickson, Bay St. Louis  
Ms. A.K. Creamer, Bay St. Louis  
M/M James Toledano, Sr., B. S. L.  
Mrs. Judith Popack, Diamondhead  
Mrs. Kay Kistler, Kiln  
Mr. Robert Lacoste, Metairie  
Ms. Yvonne L. Kottelman, Metairie  
Mr. John H. Weston, Lexington, Ky.  
Four Seasons, Bay St. Louis  
Ms. Gerry Land, Bay St. Louis  
Mr. Harry Frierson, Jr., Kiln  
Mrs. Virginia Criss, Diamondhead  
Mr. Read Breeland, Bay St. Louis  
M/M Alan Leonhard, Metairie  
Mrs. William Goddell, Waveland  
Mrs. Connie Richards, Diamondhead  
Mrs. Gunda Cusick, Diamondhead  
Mr. Louis Rupp, Waveland

Ms. Beverly Vaughn, Kiln  
M/M Patrick La Nasa, Diamondhead  
Dr. and Mrs. Milton York, Diamondhead  
Mrs. Polly Ramsey, Bay St. Louis  
Mrs. Pat Casey, Bay St. Louis  
Col. & Mrs. Charles Ingraham, Diamondhead

### LOBRANO HOUSE HOURS

MONDAY	8 a.m.
through	to
FRIDAY	4 p.m.

### THE

## HISTORIAN

OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Publisher  
Editor

Charles H. Gray  
Edith Back

Published monthly by the

### HANCOCK COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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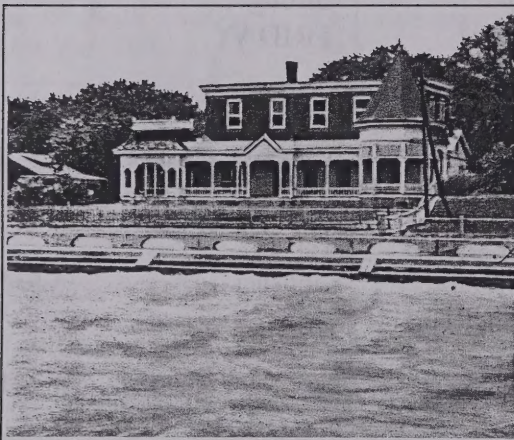




## THE FELL / CRANE HOME

*426 South Beach Boulevard, Waveland, Mississippi*

This elegant mansion at Oak Street and the beach in Waveland was built in the 1880s and was described in *Along the Gulf*, printed in 1895, as "By far one of the most attractive places at Waveland." The statement is as true today as then. Both the grounds and the rooms of this property are very spacious. The formal living room measures 26X20 feet and contains all French windows and doors. The dining room is slightly larger and when the two rooms are combined they can accommodate a formal ball of 100 guests.



View from an early 20th century post card

Mr. and Mrs. James J. Crane purchased the house and have recently completed an extraordinarily fine recreation of the grand porches which dominated the front elevation before being destroyed in Hurricane Camille.



# HISTORICAL SOCIETY SUPPORTERS

WE APPRECIATE THE SUPPORT THAT THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS HAVE GIVEN TO THE  
HANCOCK COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



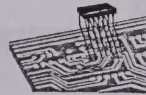
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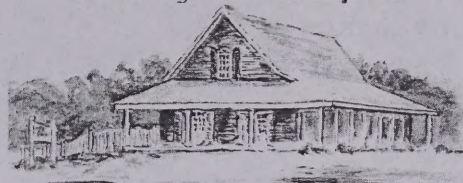
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*HANCOCK COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY*

# HANCOCK COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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